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News Daily Logo

Trump's State of the Union address, and the Democratic response

NPR reports: The stakes are high for President Trump ahead of his second State of the Union speech, as he remains at a logjam with Congress over immigration in the shadow of the longest government shutdown in U.S. history.

It's the first time Trump will address Congress with Democrats controlling the House, and the White House has said in the days leading up to the important annual address that the president will make a bipartisan pitch, outlining a "policy agenda both parties can rally behind."

However, Trump's rhetoric throughout his presidency — and in the hours ahead of his speech — is likely to undercut that message and make it hard for his highly anticipated remarks to break through.

LISTEN LIVE at 6 p.m. to Trump's address and the Democratic response, plus NPR analysis. And WATCH LIVE here.

Photo: The U.S. Capitol Building seen on Feb. 5, 2019, in Washington, DC. (Zach

Gibson/Getty Images)

Couple who fought travel ban will attend State of the Union

A Stockton man who struggled under President Donald Trump's travel ban to bring his wife to the U.S. to see their dying toddler, will attend tonight's State of the Union address. His wife, a citizen from Yemen, will also be in the audience at the U.S. Capitol.

The couple is attending as guests of two members of Congress from the San Francisco Bay Area.

Hassan said he hopes that their presence at the State of the Union will remind the president and lawmakers of the impact the travel ban is having on Americans with relatives in affected countries.

"I just hope other families don't have to go through this," he said. "It's important to keep families together."

Photo: Shaima Swileh holds her ailing son, Abdullah, who died from a rare degenerative brain condition about a week after his mother arrived in the U.S. (Council on American-Islamic Relations, Sacramento Valley)

Resisting transparency

California Attorney General Xavier Becerra will give Democrats' Spanish-language rebuttal to President Trump's State of the Union Address Tuesday, while also facing criticism for refusing to release police misconduct records.

Though he is one of California's leading voices speaking out against Trump, free speech advocates say Becerra is backing a "spurious interpretation" of California's new sunlight law that requires law enforcement agencies to release misconduct records.

Becerra's office said that because Richmond and Los Angeles police unions sued to block misconduct files from being released, he would not release misconduct records about law enforcement agents working for his department.

Cartoon: Mark Fiore

California woman accuses Virginia's Lt. Gov. of sexual assault

NPR reports: A California woman who has accused Virginia Lt. Gov. Justin Fairfax of sexually assaulting her 15 years ago has hired the same law firm that represented Christine Blasey Ford in her allegations against then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh.

Fairfax has denied the allegation, which first surfaced on a conservative blog and was later described in a report by The Washington Post.

The allegation has come to light just as Fairfax could be on the verge of becoming the state's chief executive in the wake of a scandal involving Democratic Gov. Ralph Northam and a blackface yearbook photo.

Bay Area peaks, surrounding mountains get dusting of snow

I love this photo: A snowperson (gender neutral) in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Taken near Summit Road by Rich Goldberg.

Bay Area residents awoke Tuesday morning to find snow dusting hilltops and mountains following a rare combination of cold temperatures and precipitation that hit the region Monday.

Snow fell on Mount Hamilton, Mount Diablo, Mount Tamalpais, on hills surrounding San Jose, across the Santa Cruz Mountains and a portion of Upper Skyline Boulevard in San Mateo County.

The National Weather Service even reported a slight dusting of snow on Twin Peaks in San Francisco at about 3 a.m. on Tuesday.

Here are some more terrific photos of the snow.

Why do some parts of the Bay Area always get more rain?

Yes, it's a real thing. There are parts of the North Bay that are well known for their high winter rain totals. Ditto for the area around Mount Tamalpais in Marin County and the Santa Cruz Mountains.

That's what we've seen in our most recent series of storms, during which nearly 10 inches of rain has fallen in the mountains south of San Jose and nearly 9 inches has come down in northern Sonoma.

The main cause here, as in regions throughout California and the world, is local topography and what meteorologists term orographic lifting (and yes, you're going to want to know what that means).

Photo: Cars drive on a flooded road in Guerneville in January 2017. The Russian River town is downstream from Venado, a site in the northern Sonoma County

hills that is one of the rainiest locations in California. (Justin Sullivan/Getty Images)

West Coast storms get some respect with new scale

There hasn't been a convenient way to classify atmospheric rivers according to their ferocity -- until now.

A team of atmospheric scientists have come up with a scale similar to those used for hurricanes, tornadoes and earthquakes.

The new scale, proposed Tuesday in the Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society, is similar to the one used for hurricanes: storms are classified as category 1 through 5, according to how much water they're packing and how long they're likely to stick around, wringing out that moisture as precipitation over land.

"These atmospheric rivers are the most impactful storms for the West," says Marty

Ralph, who led the effort to develop the scale at Scripps Institution of Oceanography in San Diego. "In fact, something like 90 percent of the flood damages in the western U.S. come from atmospheric river-type storms. And we need to distinguish the hazardous ones from the beneficial ones."

Estrada's restaurant closes after 102 years of serving Daly City

One of the Bay Area's oldest restaurants is saying goodbye after 102 years of operation. Estrada's Restaurant held a public closing celebration on Sunday.

The legacy of the restaurant, which has changed owners several times over the years, is partly tied to a menu that features Mexican and Caribbean cuisine.

It's in part a sense of responsibility for all of this history that kept owners Aggen

and Julio Mercedes going for the past 12 years.

Several years ago, the restaurant was featured on Food Network's "Restaurant Impossible" show, and the remodel from that appearance helped bring them out of debt.

"We made a promise to go to 100 years, and we work hard because we love it, but we also do it because we're crazy, and it's time now," Aggen said. "You have to stop and smell the roses!"

Photo: Estrada's Restaurant owners Julio Mercedes and Bernadette Aggen celebrate the end of an era. (Sara Hossaini/KQED)

Today's KQED News Daily was produced by Miranda Leitsinger in San Francisco. Got ideas, stories, comments? Email me: mleitsinger@kqed.org

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